



5 Top Tips for Marketing at Xmas

By Clare Bushby
Managing Director of Clockwork Marketing

Bio:

Clare Bushby MIH (Member of the Institute of Hospitality) has spent her entire working life in the hospitality sector. She began in independent hotels, exploring a variety of roles leading to hotel management and creating the marketing department for 120 room, four-star, Blunsdon House. This long experience provided a deep understanding of the sector and the challenges hoteliers can face. With an ambition to have her own business, Clare launched Clockwork Marketing in 1992, providing digital marketing services, branding and design, websites and gift vouchers to hospitality businesses across the UK.

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The Summer staycation is over and so too is the bounce back boom. But fear not, Christmas needn't be quieter.

Following two Festive breaks where quality time with friends and family was disrupted, this Christmas is your chance to capture new guests wanting to reconnect.

There are a number of marketing tips you can use to link into guests' emotional needs at Christmas to boost your bookings.

#1 Seasonal Photography

We are constantly amazed that hospitality providers spend a fortune upgrading their accommodation but then don't spend enough on good photography or video.

Often your first point of contact is via your website and you want to show off your accommodation to its very best. Investing in a professional photographer could make a massive difference to your bottom line.

For those that can afford to, investing in some seasonal photography for winter and Christmas and the rest of the year can be invaluable. Scenes of your B&B in the snow, warming log fires or nicely decorated for Christmas will make you stand out from the crowd and play to guests' nostalgia for the season of good will.

#2 Quality Time Together

Many people will want to celebrate together with a break away. A cottage B&B is the perfect getaway where people can keep themselves to themselves. Spending some quality time away together at Christmas to make it a special occasion is a marketing campaign you could promote.

Alternatively, a break away from the family after all spending so much time together could provide a more humorous campaign.

#3 Promote Local Events

People will often look beyond the accommodation to what else there is to do in the area. Make the most of what's going on in your local area. Research the best Christmas markets and candle-lit carol services etc and promote these alongside your accommodation to attract new guests.

#4 Experiences and Packages

If you're prepared to go the extra mile, then making their lives easier is a great way to boost bookings. Package your accommodation with Christmas experiences that they don't have to search for and book separately, e.g. Christmas wreath-making or candle-dipping. It adds value and will provide guests with a talking point, post visit.

#5 Target High-Paying Guests

Many of your guests will go away for a short break more than twice a year. If you're able to analyse your booking system data, find those that stayed with you in the Summer. Target these guests that have been happy to pay a higher rate in the Summer with an out-of-season Christmas break.

Christmas Marketing Quiz

– How effective is your marketing?

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3pts. Send monthly marketing emails to your past guests/subscribers | 5pts. Have a plan to stay top of Google search |
| 3pts. Use reels and retargeting on your Instagram | 1pts. Promote local events and destinations on your website |
| 5pts. Have a clear understanding of your target audience | 1pt. Create seasonal content on your website |
| 5pts. Track direct bookings with Google Analytics | 10pts. Have a website that works on mobiles |
| 3pts. Have a rate plan that reflects the seasons | 3pts. Have an easy-to-use content management system for your website |
| 3pts. Track your weekly occupancy | 3pts. Post different content to each social channel |

How did you score...?

1 – 10:

Oh-no...

You need to focus on the basics. Start small and get an action plan in place.

11 – 20:

Better than some...

You need to level up. Try and implement a couple of the ideas above to help improve your marketing strategy.

21 – 35:

Good work!

You're on the right track, but you still need a push... What are you missing that will make you a marketing champ?

36 – 45:

Marketing Guru!

Well done! Don't lose your momentum. Marketing is continuous so keep your eye on the prize.